The purpose of the Sociology Honors Program is to provide highly-motivated students with advanced training in key research, analytical and writing skills; to guide them on the preparation of an Honors thesis/proposal; and to offer one-on-one professional guidance for those planning to move onto graduate school and prepare for the job market. The seminar can help you fine-tune the kind of critical thinking, sociological knowledge, and practical skills you will need in a wide range of careers, including academia, business, social welfare, government, medicine, and law. Among other things, the process of preparing and defending a research proposal can teach you how to think critically about interpersonal relations, organizational structures, and social inequality; to write effective fundraising grants; to provide well-informed political commentary on social issues; to put together strong business presentations and proposals; and to issue critical legal briefs and official reports based on solid evidence. In addition, you will have the opportunity to interact with a faculty member, who can be a great resource for future recommendation letters and career guidance.

To be eligible to participate in the Sociology Honors Program, you need to have an overall grade point of average of at least 3.25. You must also be a declared major in sociology with a sociology grade point average of at least 3.50 and must have completed your core major requirements (Soc.115, 220, 221, 235) or at least 12 credits of course work in Sociology by the time you are enrolled in the program. In some cases, there is some flexibility if the Director feels your record is promising and you are able to handle the intensity of the program (e.g. some students have been admitted to the program with, say, a 3.20 overall or a 3.40 in sociology). You are expected to maintain the same grade point minimums during your involvement in the program.

Currently, the core of the Program is an Honors thesis to be prepared during your senior year. Two special courses are designed to help you accomplish this. In their junior year, students enroll in Sociology 488W Honors Research Proposal Seminar. This course focuses on helping you to create a proposal for your thesis research—how to design a research question, develop a theoretical argument, review relevant literature, collect and analyze data, and present results. The course will also include some discussion on researching, preparing for, and taking advantage of professional opportunities and post-graduate training using your Sociology degree and training. Depending on your individual needs, you will have a chance to consult with career advisors; get feedback on your resume and job/professional school portfolio; and receive some guidance on where to go after graduation. The course is guided by the Honors Director, who helps each student select a faculty mentor for the proposed thesis project. Note: You may take this course in lieu of the required 400-level seminar, because it is structured to meet writing-intensive/oral discourse/information literacy requirements like the 400-level seminar.

In the fall and/or the spring of their senior year students enroll in Sociology 498 (Senior Honors Thesis) to conduct the research and write the thesis they proposed the previous spring under the guidance of the assigned faculty mentor. Although the specific deadlines may vary depending on the

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1 For outstanding transfer students and latecomers, we have restructured the program to include an expedited track where you would take the Soc.488w with Criminal Justice in the fall semester of senior year and then complete the Honors thesis with a Sociology faculty mentor the spring semester. However, because this is a condensed course, we would recommend this only to those who have strong academic records and sufficient time in their schedule to stay on track. Please see the Director for more details.
project and arrangement each student makes with the faculty mentor, the student is expected to provide periodic drafts and progress reports throughout the senior year and to present the finished thesis to the faculty mentor and the Honors Director before the end of the spring semester. The student then graduates “with honors in sociology.”

The topics of some recent honors theses have included:

- How terrorist groups recruit new members and maintain group cohesion even though suicide is a valued action for group members
- How family birth order shapes occupational choices later in life
- How religion plays a role in reducing the likelihood of juvenile delinquent behavior
- How the content and delivery of sex education shapes the values and views of youths on sexual behavior
- How and under what conditions military and political enemies in World War II and the Cold War still managed to cooperate
- What role sentiment plays in the social interactions of individuals with different social status
- How labor/management negotiations have evolved at General Electric since the early twentieth century

We are currently in the middle of restructuring the program in order to better meet student needs and make the program more attractive to enrolled students, including an end-of-the-year colloquium where students present their final Honors thesis to all program students in Sociology and Criminal Justice. I encourage you to come speak to me if there is anything in particular you’d be interested in pursuing within the requirements of the program.

Your "award" in taking this course is producing a highly-quality senior thesis and job portfolio that represents the best work of your undergraduate career. Your thesis can be used as a writing sample in any field you enter. I will encourage you to submit your papers to different competitions, journals, and conferences that may come up throughout the year and to stay in touch with our department after you graduate. In addition, you will receive special recognition at the commencement awards ceremony and will be able to include this distinction to your resume. We would like to maintain relations with the alumni of our program and to provide opportunities for you to network with one another.

In the last couple of years students who have completed the Sociology Honors Program have gone on to graduate training at Arizona, Cornell, UCLA, and UAlbany, among other places. Some have moved on to law school or business school. Still more have gone directly into the job market following graduation. Most have found their experience in the program valuable in preparing them for the paths they have followed.

If you have questions or are interested in becoming a member of the Sociology Honors Program, please contact Professor Chung at aychung@albany.edu. I will send out surveymonkey application links to those who may qualify in September and start reviewing applications after November 15th.²

² If you are an incoming transfer student, you may not be able to apply until spring, but please feel free to contact me if you feel you are on track to meet program GPA/ course requirements and are interested in the expedited track for senior year.